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GIRLS, WIVES, AND MOTHERS.

A WORD TO THE MIDDLE CLASSES.

THERE may be theoretically much to sympathise with in the cry for the yet higher culture of the women of our middle classes, but at the same time not a little to find fault with in practice. While it is difficult to believe that there can be such a thing as over-education of the human subject, male or female, there may yet be false lines of training, which lead to a dainty misplaced refinement, quite incompatible with the social position the woman may be called to fill in after-life, and which too often presupposes, what even education has a difficulty in supplying—a subsistence in life. Where we equip, we too frequently impede. In the hurry to be intelligent and accomplished, the glitter of drawing-room graces is an object of greater desire than the more homely but not less estimable virtues identified with the kitchen. Our young housewives are imbued with far too much of the æsthete at the expense of the cook; too much of the stage, and too little of the home. In abandoning the equally mistaken views of our grandfathers on women's up-bringing, we have gone to the opposite extreme, to the exclusion of anything like a means to an end; and in the blindest disregard of the recipients' circumstances in life, present and prospective.

In considering what the aim of female education ought to be, it is surely not too much to expect that of all things it should mentally and physically fit our women for the battle of life. Its application and utility should not have to end where they practically do at present—at the altar. While it is necessary to provide a common armour for purposes of general defence, there certainly ought to be a special strengthening of the harness where most blows are to be anticipated; and if not to all, certainly to middle-class women, the years of battle come *after*, not before marriage. Every one of them, then, ought to be trained in conformity with the supreme law of her being,

to prove a real helpmate to the man that takes her to wife. Make sure that she is first of all thoroughly qualified for a mother's part, in what may be called a working sphere of life; then add whatever graces may be desirable as a sweetening, according to taste, means, and opportunity. It is in this happy blending of abstract knowledge with the economy of a home, that true success in the education of middle-class women must be sought.

In the training of our boys, utility in after-life is seldom lost sight of. Why should it be too often the reverse in the education of our girls, whose great vocation in life, as wives and mothers, is a birthright they cannot renounce, which no lord of creation can deprive them of, and which no sticklers for what they are pleased to call the rights of women can logically disown? No doubt, among the last-named there are extreme people, who cannot, from the very nature of their own individual circumstances, see anything in wifely cares save the shackles of an old-world civilisation. In their eyes, motherhood is a tax upon pleasure, and an abasement of the sex. With them, there need be no parley. There is no pursuit under the sun that a woman will not freely forsake—often at a sacrifice—for the wifely cares that supervene on marriage; and therein, few will deny, lies her great and natural sphere in life. Than it, there is no nobler. In it, she can encounter no rival; and any attempt to divest herself of nature's charge can have but one ending. The blandishments of a cold æstheticism can never soothe, animate, and brighten the human soul, like the warm, suffusive joys which cluster round the married state.

Here we may briefly digress to remark, that in our opinion, no valid objections can be urged against women entering professional life, *provided they stick to it*. They already teach, and that is neither the lightest nor least important of masculine pursuits. Why should they not prescribe for body and soul? why not turn their proverbial gifts of speech to a golden account at the bar? It would be in quitting any of these

professions, and taking up the rôle of wife and mother, which they would have to learn at the expense of their own and others' happiness, that the real mischief of the liberty would lie. In nine cases out of ten, their failure in the second choice would be assured, thereby poisoning all social well-being at its very source.

The woman not over- but mis-educated is becoming an alarmingly fruitful cause of the downward tendencies of much of our middle-class society. She herself is less to blame for this, than the short-sighted, though possibly well-meant policy of her parents and guardians, who, in the worst spirit of the age, venerate their own flesh and blood, as they do their furniture, for appearance's sake. Let us glance at the educational equipment they provide their girls with, always premising that our remarks are to be held as strictly applicable only to the middle ranks of our complex society.

Our typical young woman receives a large amount of miscellaneous education, extending far through her teens, and amounting to a very fair mastery of the *Ks*. If she limp in any of these, it will be in the admittedly vexatious processes of arithmetic. She will have a pretty ready command of the grammatical and idiomatic uses of her mother-tongue; a fairly firm hold of the geography of this planet, and an intelligent conception of the extra-terrestrial system. She will have plodded through piles of French and German courses, learning many things from them but the language. She will have a fair if not profound knowledge of history. She can, in all likelihood, draw a little, and even paint; but of all her accomplishments, what she must imperatively excel in is music. From tender years, she will have diligently laboured at all the musical profundities; and her chances in the matrimonial market of the future are probably regarded as being in proportion to her proficient manipulation of the keyboard. If she can sing, well and good; play on the piano she must. If, as a girl, she has no taste for instrumental music, and no ear to guide her flights in harmony, the more reason why she should, with the perseverance of despair, thump away on the irresponsive ivories, in defiance of every instinct in her being. The result at twenty may be something tangible in some cases, but extremely unsatisfactory at the price.

During all these years, she has been systematically kept ignorant of almost every domestic care. Of the commonplaces of cookery she has not the remotest idea. A great educationist, whose statement we have good reason to indorse, asserts that there are thousands of our young housewives that do not know how to cook a potato. This may seem satire. It is, we fear, in too many cases, true, and we quote it with a view to correct rather than chastise.

The misapplications of young miss's upbringing do not end here. She cannot sew to any purpose. If she deign to use a needle at all, it is to embroider a smoking-cap for a lover or a pair of slippers for papa. To sew on a button, or cut out and unite the plainest piece of male or female clothing, is not always within her powers, or at least her inclinations. Prosaic vulgar work, fit only for dressmakers and milliners! She will spend weeks and months over

eighteen inches of what she is pleased to call lace, while the neighbouring seamstress is making up all her underclothing, to pay for which, papa has not too much money; but then it is genteel.

She cannot knit. A pair of worsted cuffs or a lanky cravat is something great to attain to; while a stocking, even were the charwomen less easily paid, is sure to come off the needles right-lined as any of Euclid's parallelograms—all leg and no ankle—a suspicion of foot, but never a vestige of heel. To darn the hole that so soon appears in the loosely knitted fabric, would be a servile, reproachful task, quite staggering to the sentimental aspirations of our engaged Angelina. Yet darning and the divine art of mending will one day be to her a veritable philosopher's stone, whose magic influences will shed beams of happiness over her household, and fortunate will she be if she have not to seek it with tears.

By the sick-bed, where she ought to be supreme, she is often worse than useless. The pillows that harden on the couch of convalescence, too rarely know her softening touch. She may be all kindness and attention—for the natural currents of her being are full to repletion of sweetness and sympathy—yet as incapable of really skilled service as an artist's lay-figure. And, as a last touch to the sorry picture, instead of being in any way a source of comfort to the bread-winners of her family, or a lessening of the strain on their purse-strings, she is a continual cause of extra work to servants, of anxiety to her parents, of *ennui* to herself.

Apparently, the chief mission of the young lady to whom we address ourselves, is to entice some eligible young man into the responsibilities of wedlock. He, poor fellow, succumbs not so much to intrinsic merits, as to fine lady-like airs. He sees the polish on the surface, and takes for granted that there is good solid wear underneath. Our young miss has conquered, and quits the family roof-tree, sweetly conscious of her orange wreath of victory; but alas!—we are sorry to say it—do not her conquests too often end at the altar, unless she resolutely set herself to learn the exacting mysteries of her new sphere, and, what is far more difficult, to unlearn much that she has acquired? That she often does at this stage make a bold and firm departure from the toyish fancies of her training, and makes, from the sheer plasticity and devotion of her character, wonderful strides in the housewife's craft, we cheerfully confess. Were it otherwise, the domestic framework of society would be in a far more disorganised condition than it happily is. But why handicap her for the most important, most arduous portion of her race in life? Why train her to be the vapid fine lady, with almost the certainty that, by so doing, you are taking the surest means of rendering her an insufficient wife and mother? And, unfortunately, not always, in fact but seldom, is she able, when she crosses her husband's threshold, to tear herself away from her omnivorous novel-reading, piano-playing, and all the other alleviations of confirmed idleness.

The sweets of the honeymoon and an undefined vacation beyond make no great calls on her as a helpmate and wife. If her husband's means permit of a servant or two, the smoother the water and the plainer the sailing for the nonce; although

these keen-scented critics in the kitchen will, in a very short time, detect and take the grossest advantage of their mistress's inexperience. Besides, if we reflect that among our middle classes more marry on an income of two hundred pounds than on a higher, it becomes painfully apparent that two or three servants are the one thing our young housewife needs, but cannot possibly afford.

She is now, however, only about to begin her life-work, and if there is such a thing clearly marked out for a being on this globe, it is for woman. By birthright, she is the mother of the human race. Could she have a greater, grander field for enterprise? How admirably has nature fitted her for performing the functions of the mother and adorning the province of the wife! Hence, there devolves upon her a responsibility which no extraneous labour in more inviting fields can excuse. No philosophy, no tinkering of the constitution, no success in the misnamed higher walks of life and knowledge, will atone for the failure of the mother. Let her shine a social star of the first magnitude, let her be supreme in every intellectual circle, and then marry, as she is ever prone to do, in spite of all theories; and if she fail as a mother, she fails as a woman and as a human being. She becomes a mere rag, a tatter of nature's cast-off clothing, spiritless, aimless, a failure in this great world of work.

As her family increases, the household shadows deepen, where all should be purity, sweetness, and light. The domestic ship may even founder through the downright, culpable incapacity of her that takes the helm. Her children never have the air of comfort and cleanliness. In their clothes, the stitch is never in time. The wilful neglect, and consequent waste, in this one matter of half-worn clothing is almost incredible. A slatternly atmosphere pervades her entire home. With the lapse of time our young wife becomes gradually untidy, dishevelled, and even dirty, in her own person; and at last sits down for good, disconsolate and overwhelmed by her unseen foe. Her husband can find no pleasure in the 'hugger-mugger,' as Carlyle phrases it, of his home; there is no brightness in it to cheer his hours of rest. He returns from his daily labours to a chaos, which he shuns by going elsewhere; and so the sequel of misery and neglect takes form.

As a first precaution against such a calamity, let us strip our home-life of every taint of quackery. Let us regard women's education, like that of men, as a means to a lifelong end, never forgetting that if we unfit it for everyday practice, we render it a mere useless gem, valuable in a sense, but unset. Middle-class women will be the better educated, in every sense, the more skilled they are in the functions of the mother and the duties of the wife. Give them every chance of proving thrifty wives and good mothers, in addition to, or, where that is impossible, to the exclusion of accomplished brides. Let some part of their training as presently constituted, such as the rigours of music, and the fritterings of embroidery, give way, in part, to the essential acquirements which every woman, every mother should possess, and which no gold can buy. Give us a woman; then, natural in her studies, her training, her vocations, and her dress, and in the words of the

wisest of men, who certainly had a varied experience of womankind, we shall have something 'far more precious than rubies.' She will not be afraid of the snow for her household; strength and honour will be her clothing; her husband shall have no need of spoil; he shall be known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders; he shall praise her; and her children shall call her blessed.

BY MEAD AND STREAM.

CHAPTER IV.—IN THE OAK PARLOUR.

AND so, it had been only a bit of Uncle Dick's kindly forethought and common-sense which had prompted the alarming words he had spoken to Madge. How she and Philip laughed at the chimerical idea that there could be any possible combination of circumstances in time or space which could alter their thoughts regarding each other! The birds in the orchard, in the intervals of pecking the fruit, seemed to sing a joyous laughing chorus at the absurdity of it—notwithstanding that the admission of it might be prudent.

But when they came down to the point of vague admission that in the abstract and in relation to other couples—of course it could not apply to their own case—Uncle Dick's counsel was such as prudent young people about to separate should keep in mind, an expression of perplexity flitted across Madge's face. She looked at him with those tenderly wistful serious eyes, half doubting whether or not to utter the thought which had come to her.

'But what I cannot understand,' she said slowly, 'is why Uncle Dick should have been in such a temper. You know that although he may fly into a passion at anything that seems to him wrong, he never keeps it up. Now he had all the time riding home from Kingshope to cool, and yet when he spoke to me he seemed to be as angry as if he had just come out of the room where the quarrel took place.'

'What can it matter to us?' was the blithe response. 'He is not angry with me or with you, and so long as that is the case we need not mind if he should quarrel with all creation.'

'I'll tell you what we will do,' she said, and the disappearance of all perplexity from her face showed that she was quite of his opinion, although she wanted to have it supported by another authority.

'What is that?'

'We will go in and ask Aunt Hussy what she thinks about it. . . . Are you aware, sir' (this with a pretty assumption of severity), 'that you have not seen aunty to-day, and that you have not even inquired about her?'

'That is bad,' he muttered; but it was evident that the badness which he felt was the interruption of the happy wandering through the orchard by this summary recall to duty.

In his remorse, however, he was ready to sacrifice his present pleasure; for Aunt Hussy was a stanch friend of theirs, and it might be that her cheery way of looking at things would dispel the last lingering cloud of doubt from Madge's mind regarding the misunderstanding between his father and Uncle Dick.

'Then we had better go in at once; we shall find her in the dairy.'

Mrs Crawshaw was superintending the operations of three buxom maidens who were scalding the large cans in which the milk was conveyed every morning to the metropolis. Her ruddy face with the quiet, kindly gray eyes was that of a woman in her prime, and even her perfectly white hair did not detract from the sense of youth which was expressed in her appearance: it was an additional charm. She was nearly sixty. Her age was a standing joke of Uncle Dick's. He had made the discovery that she was a month older than himself, and he magnified it into a year.

'Can't you see?' he would say, 'if you are born in December and I am born in January, that makes exactly a year's difference!'

Then there would be a loud guffaw, and Uncle Dick would feel that he had completely overcome the Missus. The words and the guffaw were as a rule simultaneous, and if nobody happened to be present, it usually ended in Uncle Dick putting his arm round her neck and saying with a lump in his throat: 'My old lass—young always to me.'

He had not the slightest notion of the poetry that was in his soul whilst he spoke.

Mrs Crawshaw believed in young love. She had been very happy in hers. She had been brought up on a farm. Lads had come about her of course, and she had put them aside with a—'Nay, lad, I'm not for thee,' and had thought no more about them. Then Dick Crawshaw had come, and—she did not know why—she had said: 'Yes, thou art my lad.'

They had been very happy notwithstanding their losses—indeed the losses seemed to have drawn them closer together.

'It's only you and me, my old lass,' he would say in their privacy.

'Only you and me, Dick,' she would say as her gray head rested on his breast with all the emotion of youth in her heart.

'Go into the oak parlour,' said Mrs Crawshaw cheerily to the young folks, when she understood their mission; 'and I'll be with you in a minute.'

The oak parlour was the stateroom of the house. It was long and high; the oak of the panels and beams which supported the pointed roof were of that dark hue which only time can impart. The three narrow windows had been lengthened by Dick's father, and when the moon shone through them they were like three white ghosts looking in upon the dark chamber. But the moon did not often get a chance of doing this, for there was only a brief period of the year during which there was not a huge fire blazing in the great old-fashioned ingle. There were four portraits of former Crawshaws and three of famous horses; with these exceptions the walls were bare, for none of the family had ever been endowed with much love of art.

There were some legends still current about the mysteries hidden behind the sombre panels. One of the panels was specially honoured because it was reputed to have a recess behind it in which the king had found shelter for a time during his flight from the Roundheads. But owing to the

indifference or carelessness of successive generations, nobody was now quite sure to which of the panels this honour properly belonged. There had been occasional attempts made to discover the royal hiding-place, but they had hitherto failed.

The furniture was plain and substantial, displaying the styles of several periods of manufacture. In spite of the stiff straight lines of most of the things in the room, the red curtains, the red table-cover, the odd variety of the chairs gave the place a homely and, when the fire was ablaze, a cosy expression. This stateroom was correctly called 'parlour,' and it had been the scene of many a revel.

As Philip and Madge were on their way to the oak parlour, a servant presented a card to the latter.

'He asked for you, miss,' said the girl, and passed on to the kitchen.

Madge looked at the card, and instantly held it out to Philip.

'Hullo!—my father,' ejaculated he, adding with a laugh: 'Now you can see that this mountain of yours is not even a molehill.'

'How can you tell that?'

'Because my father is the reverse of Uncle Dick. He never forgets—I doubt if he ever forgives—an unpleasant word. And yet here he is. Come along at once—but we had better say nothing to him about the affair unless he speaks of it himself.'

They entered the room together, smiling hopelessly.

Mr Lloyd Hadleigh was standing at a window, hat in one hand, slim umbrella in the other, and staring hard at the shrubs. He had a way of staring hard at everything, and yet the way was so calm and thoughtful that he did not appear to see anything or anybody, and thus the stare was not offensive.

'The gov'nor always seems to be dreaming about you when he looks at you, and you never know when he's going to speak—that's awkward,' was the description of his expression given by Caleb Kersey, one of the occasional labourers on Ringsford.

He was a man of average height, firmly built; square face; thick black moustache; close cropped black hair, with only an indication of thinning on the top and showing few streaks of white. His age was not more than fifty, and he had attained the full vigour of life.

'People talk about the fire and "go" of thirty,' he would say in his dry way. 'It is nonsense. At that age a man is either going downhill or going up it, and in either case he is too much occupied and worried to have time to be happy. That was the most miserable period of my life.'

Coldness was the first impression of his outward character. No one had ever seen him in a passion. Successful in business, he had provided well for the five children of a very early marriage. He never referred to that event, and had been long a widower without showing the slightest inclination to establish a new mistress at Ringsford.

He turned on the entrance of Madge and Philip, saluting the former with grave politeness; then to the latter: 'There are some letters for you at home, Philip.'

'Thank you, sir; but I have no doubt they can wait. I am to stay for dinner here.'

'From the postmarks I judge they are of importance.'

'Ah—then I know who they are from, and in that case there is no hurry at all, for the mail does not leave until Monday.'

Mr Hadleigh addressed himself to Madge—no sign of annoyance in voice or manner.

'May I be permitted to have a few minutes' conversation with you in private, Miss Heathcote?'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' broke in Philip hastily; 'I did not understand you to mean that you found me in the way.—If your aunt should ask for me, Miss Heathcote, I shall be in the garden.'

With a good-natured inclination of the head, he went out. And as he walked down the garden path filling his pipe, he muttered to himself thoughtfully: 'Seems to me he grows queerer and queerer every day. What *can* be the matter with him? If anybody else had asked for a private interview so solemnly, I should have taken it for granted that he was going to propose. . . . Daresay he wants to give some explanation of that confounded row, and make his apologies through Madge. I should like him to do that.'

But Mr Hadleigh was neither going to propose nor to make apologies. He smiled, a curious sort of half-sad, half-amused smile, and there was really something interesting in the expression of his eyes at the moment.

'The truth is, Miss Heathcote, that I cannot acknowledge weakness before Philip. He is such a reckless fellow about money, that he would tell me I ought to give in at once to the labourers.'

'I am sure he would not, Mr Hadleigh, if he thought you were in the right.'

'I am not one likely to hold out if convinced that I am in the wrong.'

'Few men do' under these conditions, Mr Hadleigh, said Madge, smiling.

'Well, at anyrate, I want your assistance very much; will you give it?'

'With great pleasure, if it is worth anything to you.'

'It is worth everything; for what harvest I might have on the home-farm—and I understand it promises to be a good one—is likely to be lost unless you help me.'

'How can that be, Mr Hadleigh?'

'Through beer. This is how the matter stands. You know the dispute about the wages, and I am willing to give in to that. But on this question of beer in the field I am firm. The men and women shall have the price of it; but I will neither give beer on the field nor permit them to bring it there. A great reform is to be worked in this matter, and I mean to do what little I can to advance it. I am sure, Miss Heathcote, you must acknowledge that I am right in adhering to this resolution.'

'I have been brought up in some very old-fashioned notions, Mr Hadleigh,' she answered with pretty evasiveness.

'There is a high principle at stake in it, my dear Miss Heathcote, and it is worth fighting for.'

'But I do not yet see how my services are to

be of use to you,' she said, anxious to avoid this debatable subject. It was one on which her uncle had quite different views from those of Mr Hadleigh. And, therefore, she could not altogether sympathise with the latter's enthusiasm, eager as she was to see the people steady and sober, for she remembered at the moment that he had made a considerable portion of his fortune out of a brewery.

'That was exactly what I was about to explain,' he replied. 'I came to beg you to speak to Caleb Kersey.'

'Caleb!—why, he never touches anything stronger than tea.'

'That may be; but he believes that other people have a right to do so if they like. He has persuaded every man and woman who comes to me or my bailiff to put the question: "Is there to be beer?" When they are answered: "No; but the money," they turn on their heels and march off, so that at this moment we have only two men. Now, my dear Miss Heathcote, will you persuade Kersey to stop his interference?'

'I do not see that he is interfering; but I will speak to him.'

'Thanks, thanks. If you were with me I should have no difficulty.'

'You would find me a very bad second,' she answered, laughing, 'for I should say—submit to old customs until persuasion alters them, since force never can.'

Two things struck Madge during this interview and the commonplaces about nothing which followed it: The first, how much more frank and at ease he seemed to be with her than with any one else; and the second was, how loath he seemed to go.

The owner of Ringsford said to himself as he was driven away: 'I shall be glad when she is Philip's wife.'

CHAPTER V.—A NEW EDEN.

She was still standing at the door to which she had accompanied Mr Hadleigh, and was looking after him, when a kindly voice behind her said: 'He does look a woeful man. I wonder if he has any real friends.'

Madge turned. Aunt Hussy was standing there, a pitying expression on her comely face, and she was wiping her hands in her apron. There was nothing in Mrs Crawshaw's manner or appearance to indicate her Quaker antecedents, except the frequent use of *thee* and *thou*—she did not always use that form of speech—and the quiet tone of all the colours of her dress. Yet, until her marriage she had been, like her father, a good Wesleyan; after her marriage she accompanied her husband to the church in which his family had kept their place for so many generations. To her simple faith it was the same whether she worshipped in church or chapel.

'Why do you say that, aunt?'

'Because he seems to be so much alone.'

'Mr Hadleigh alone! What about all the people who visit the manor?'

'Ay, they visit the manor,' answered Aunt Hussy, with a slight shake of the head and a quiet smile.

That set Madge thinking. He did impress her as a solitary man, notwithstanding his family,

his many visitors, his school treats, his flower-shows, and other signs of a busy and what ought to be a happy life. Then there was the strange thing that he should come to ask her assistance to enable him to come to terms with the harvesters.

'I believe you are right, aunt. He is very much alone, and I suppose that was why he came to me to-day.'

'What did he want?' asked Dame Crawshaw, with unusual quickness and an expression of anxiety Madge could not remember ever having seen on her face before. She did not understand it until long afterwards.

Having explained the object of Mr Hadleigh's visit, as she understood it, she was surprised to see how much relieved her aunt looked. Knowing that that good woman had never had a secret in her life, and never made the least mystery about anything, she put the question direct: 'Did you expect him to say anything else?'

'I don't know, Madge. He is a queer man, Mr Hadleigh, in a-many ways. He spoke to your uncle about this, and he would have nothing to do with it.'

'And that is why they fell out at the market, I suppose.'

'Where is Philip? He must take after his mother, for he is straightforward in everything.'

'He is out in the garden. Shall I go for him?'

'Nay. I want more peas, so we can find him on our way for them.'

Philip had not gone far. He had walked down to the duck-pond; but after that distant excursion, he kept near the little gate beside the dairy, glancing frequently at the house-door. He was dallying with the last hours of the bright morning of his love, and he grudged every moment that Madge was away from him. A few days hence he would be looking back to this one with longing eyes. How miserable he would be on board that ship! How he would hate the sound of the machinery, knowing that every stroke of the piston was taking him so much farther away from her. And then, as the waters widened and stretched into the sky, would not his heart sink, and would he not wish that he had never started on this weary journey?

In response to that lover-like question, he heard the echo of Madge's voice in his brain: 'It was your mother's wish.'

This simple reminder was enough, for he cherished the sad memory of that sweet pale face, which smiled upon him hopefully a moment before it became calm in death.

He sprang away from these sorrowful reflections. Yes; he would look back longingly to this day when sea and sky shut out Willowmere and Madge from sight. But they would both be palpable to his mental vision; and he would look forward to that still brighter day of his return, his mission fulfilled, and nothing to do but marry Madge and live happy ever after. Ay, that should comfort him and make the present parting bearable.

Besides, who could say with what fortune he might come back? The uncle to whom he was going was rumoured to be the possessor of fabulous wealth, and although married he was child-

less. True, also, he was reported to be so eccentric that nobody could understand him, or form the slightest conception of how he would act under any given circumstances. But it was known that before he went abroad, his sister—Philip's mother—had been the one creature in whom all his affection seemed to be concentrated. An inexplicable coldness appeared in his conduct towards her after her marriage. The reason had never been explained.

Shortly before her death, however, there had come a letter from him, which made her very happy. But she had burned the letter, by his instructions, without showing it to any one or revealing its contents. Evidently it was this letter which induced her to lay upon her son the charge of going to her brother Austin Shield, whenever he should be summoned. But the uncle held no correspondence with any one at Ringsford. That he was still alive, could be only surmised from vague reports and the fact that on every anniversary of Mrs Hadleigh's birthday, with one exception, a fresh wreath of flowers was found on her grave—placed there, it was believed, by his orders. Then a few months ago, a letter had come to Philip, containing an invitation from his uncle, suggesting possible advantages, and inclosing a draft for expenses. So, being summoned, he was going; and whether the result should be good or ill fortune, his mother's last command would be obeyed, and he would return with a clear conscience to marry Madge.

That thought kept him in good-humour throughout the weary ages which seemed to elapse before he saw Madge and her aunt approaching. He ran to meet them.

'I thought you were never coming,' was his exclamation.

'Thou'lt be able to do without her for a longer time than this without troubling thyself, by-and-by,' said Dame Crawshaw with one of her pleasant smiles.

'When that day comes, I will say you are a prophetic of evil,' he retorted, laughing, but with an air of affectionate respect. That was the feeling with which she inspired everybody.

'Nay, lad; but it need not be evil, for you may be apart, surely, doing good for each other.'

'Yes; but not without wishing we were together.'

'Wilt ever be wishing that?'

'For ever and ever.'

He answered with burlesque solemnity outwardly; but Madge knew that he spoke from his heart, and in the full faith of his words. She gave him a quiet glance with those soft wistful eyes, and he was very happy.

They had reached a tall row of peas, at which Dame Crawshaw had been already busy that morning, as a wooden chair placed beside it indicated. Here she seated herself, and began to pluck the peas, shelling them as she plucked; then dropping the pods into her lap and the peas into a basin. She performed the operation with mechanical regularity, which did not in any way interfere with conversation.

Madge, kneeling beside her, helped with nimble fingers; and Philip, hands clasped behind him, stood looking on admiringly. The sun was shining upon them; and, darting shafts of light through the surrounding trees, made bright spots

amidst the moving shadows underneath. Everything seemed to be still and sleepy. The breeze was so light that there was only a gentle rustle of leaves, and through it was heard the occasional thud of an over-ripe apple or pear as it fell, and the drowsy hum of the bees.

Light, warmth, peace. 'Ah,' thought Philip, 'if we could only go on this way always! If we could fix ourselves thus as in a photograph, what a blessed Eden this would be!'

'Thou'dst find it dull soon, Philip, standing there looking at us shelling peas, if thou wert forced to do it,' said Dame Crawshaw, looking up at him with a curious smile.

'That shows you cannot guess my thoughts. They were of quite a different nature, for I was wishing that there had been some fixing process in nature, so that there might never be any change in our present positions.'

Madge looked as if she had been thinking something very similar; but she went on silently shelling peas; and a sunbeam shooting through a gap in the green pea hedge, made a golden radiance on her face.

'Eh, deary me, what love will do!' exclaimed the dame, laughing, but shaking her head regretfully, as if sorry that she could not look at things in the same hopeful humour. 'Other people have talked like that in the heyday of life. Some have found a little of their hope fulfilled; many have found none of it: all have found that they had to give up the thought of a great deal of what they expected. Some take their disappointment with wise content and make the best of things as they find them. They jog along as happily as mortals may, like Dick and me; a-many kick against the pricks and suffer sorely for it; but all have to give in sooner or later, and own that the world could not get along if everybody could arrange it to suit his own pleasure.'

How gently this good-natured philosopher brought them down from the clouds to what foolish enthusiasts call contemptuously 'the common earth.' Sensible people use the same phrase, but they use it respectfully, knowing that this 'common earth' may be made beautiful or ugly as their own actions instruct their vision.

To Philip it was quite true that most people sought something they could never attain; that many people fancied they had found the something they wanted, and discovered afterwards, to their sorrow, that they had not found the thing at all. But then, you see, it was an entirely different condition of affairs in his case. He had found what he wanted, and knew that there could be no mistake about it.

To Madge, her aunt's wisdom appeared to be very cold and even wrong in some respects, considering the placid and happy experiences of her own life. She had her great faith in Philip—her dream of a life which should be made up of devotion to him under any circumstances of joy or sorrow, and she could not believe that it was possible that their experience should be as full of crosses as that of others. And yet there was a strange faintness at her heart, as if she were vaguely conscious that there were possibilities which neither she nor Philip could foresee or understand.

'We shall be amongst the wise folk,' said Philip

confidently, 'and take things as they come, contentedly. We shall be easily contented, so long as we are true to each other—and I don't think you imagine there is any chance of a mistake in that respect.'

Aunt Hussy went on shelling peas for a time in silence. There was a thoughtful expression on her kindly face, and there was even a suggestion of sadness in it. Here were two young people—so young, so happy, so full of faith in each other—just starting on that troublous journey called Life, and she had to speak those words of warning which always seem so harsh to the pupils, until, after bitter experience, they look back and say: 'If I had only taken the warning in time, what might have been?'

By-and-by she spoke very softly: 'Thou art thinking, Madge, that I am croaking; and thou, Philip, are thinking the same. . . . Nay, there is no need to deny it. But I do not mean to dishearten thee. All I want is to make thee understand that there are many things we reckon as certain in the heyday of life, that never come to us.'

'I daresay,' said Philip, plucking a pea-pod and chewing it savagely; 'but don't you think, Mrs Crawshaw, that this is very like throwing cold-water on us, and that throwing cold-water is very apt to produce the misadventure which you think possible?—that is, that something might happen to alter our plans?'

'I am sorry for that, lad; I do not mean to throw cold-water on thee; but rather to help thee and to help Madge to look at things in a sensible way. Listen. I had a friend once who was like Madge; and she had a friend who was, as it might be, like you, Philip. He went away, as you are going, to seek his fortune in foreign parts. There was a blunder between them, and she got wedded to another man. Her first lad came back, and finding how things were, he went away again and never spoke more to her.'

'They must have been miserable.'

'For a while they were miserable enough; but they got over it.'

'I'll be bound the man never married.'

'There thou'dst be bound wrong. He did marry, and is now wealthy and prosperous, though she was taken away in a fever long ago.'

'Ay, but is he happy?'

'That is only known to himself and Him that knows us all.'

'Well, for our future I will trust Madge,' said Philip, taking her hand, 'in spite of all your forebodings; and she will trust me.'

Dame Crawshaw had filled her basin with peas, and she rose.

'God bless thee,' Philip, wherever thou goest, and make thy hopes realities,' she said with what seemed to the lovers unnecessary solemnity.

The dame went into the house. Madge and Philip went down the meadow, and under the willows by the merry river, forgot that there was any parting before them or any danger that their fortunes might be crossed.

Those bright days! Can they ever come again, or can any future joy be so full, so perfect? There are no love-speeches—little talk of any kind, and what there is, is commonplace enough. There is no need for speech. There is only—only!—the sense of the dear presence that makes

all the world beautiful, leaving the heart nothing more to desire.

But the dreams in the sunshine there under the willows, with the river murmuring sympathetic harmonies at their feet! The dreams of a future, and yet no future; for it is always to be as now. Can it be possible that this man and woman will ever look coldly on each other—ever speak angry, passionate words? Can it be possible that there will ever flit across their minds one instant's regret that they had come together?

No, no: the dreams are of the future; but the future will be always as now—full of faith and gladness.

THE CLIFF-HOUSES OF CAÑON DE CHELLY.

THE fourth and most southerly iron link of railway which will soon stretch across the North American continent from ocean to ocean is rapidly approaching completion along the thirty-fifth parallel; already it has reached the San Francisco mountains in its course to the Pacific. While avoiding the chances of blockade by snow, liable in higher latitudes, it has struck through a little explored region among the vast plains of Arizona and New Mexico. It is not easy at once to realise the extent of table-lands, greater in area than Great Britain and Ireland, upon which no soul has a settled habitation. The sun beats down with terrible force on these dry undulating plains, where at most times nothing relieves the eye, as it wanders away to the dim horizon, save a few cactus and sage-bush plants. But at seasons, heavy rains change dry gulches into roaring torrents, and parched lowlands into broad lakes, covering the country with a fine grass, on which millions of sheep, horses, and cattle are herded by wandering Navajo and Moqui Indians. To the periodical rains, as well as to geological convulsions, are traced the causes of those wondrous chasms, which in places break abruptly the rolling surface of the prairie, and extend in rocky gorges for many miles. They are called cañons. The grandeur of the scenery found in one of them, Cañon de Chelly, can scarcely be overstated.

Cañon de Chelly—pronounced Canyon de Shay—is in the north of Arizona. It takes its name from a Frenchman, who is said to have been the first white man to set foot within its walls; but except the record of a recent visit by the United States Geological Survey, no account of it seems to have hitherto appeared. The picturesque features of this magnificent ravine are unrivalled; and what lends a more fascinating interest, is the existence, among its rocky walls, of dwellings once occupied by a race of men, who, dropping into the ocean of the past with an unwritten history, are only known to us as cave-dwellers.

In October 1882, an exploring party, headed by Professor Stevenson of the Ethnological Bureau, Washington, and escorted by a number of soldiers and Indian guides, set out for this

remarkable spot. One of the party, Lieutenant T. V. Keam, has furnished the following details of their investigations. After travelling one hundred and twenty miles out from the nearest military post, Fort Defiance, and crossing a desert some twenty miles broad, the entrance to Cañon de Chelly was reached. The bed of the ravine is entirely composed of sand, which is constantly being blown along it, with pitiless force, by sudden gusts of wind. The walls of the cañon are red sandstone; at first, but some fifty feet high, they increase gradually, until at eighteen miles they reach an elevation of twelve hundred feet, which is about the highest point, and continue without decreasing for at least thirty miles. The first night, Professor Stevenson's party camped three miles from the mouth of the cañon, under a grove of cotton-wood trees, and near a clear flowing stream of water. Here the scene was an impressive one. A side ravine of great magnitude intersected the main cañon, and at the junction there stood out, like a sentinel, far from the rest of the cliff, one solemn brown stone shaft eight hundred feet high. In the morning, continuing the journey through the awful grandeur of the gorge, the walls still increased in height, some having a smooth and beautifully coloured surface reaching to one thousand feet; others, from the action of water, sand storms, and atmospheric effects, cut and broken into grand arches, battlements, and spires of every conceivable shape. At times would be seen an immense opening in the wall, stretching back a quarter of a mile, the sides covered with verdure of different shades, reaching to the summit, where tall firs with giant arms seemed dwarfed to the size of a puny gooseberry bush, and the lordly oak was only distinguished by the beautiful sheen of its leaves.

On the second night the camp was formed at the base of a cliff, in which were described, planted along a niche at a height of nearly one hundred feet, some cliff-dwellings. Next morning, these were reached after a dangerous climb, by means of a rope thrown across a projecting stick, up the almost perpendicular sides of this stupendous natural fortress. The village was perched on its narrow ledge of rock, facing the south, and was overshadowed by an enormous arch, formed in the solid side of the cañon. Overlapping the ruins for at least fifty feet, at a height above them of sixty feet, it spread its protecting roof five hundred feet from end to end. No moisture ever penetrated beyond the edge of this red shield of nature; and to its shelter, combined with the dryness of the atmosphere and preserving nature of the sand, is to be attributed the remarkable state of preservation, after such a lapse of time, in which the houses of the cliff-dwellers were found. Some of them still stood three stories high, built in compact form, close together within the extremely limited space, the timber used to support the roof being in some cases perfectly sound. The white

stone employed is gypsum, cut with stone implements, but having the outer edges smoothly dressed and evenly laid up; the stones of equal size placed parallel with each other presenting a uniform and pleasing appearance.

No remains of importance were found here, excepting a finely woven sandal, and some pieces of netting made from the fibre of the yucca plant. But on proceeding two miles farther up the cañon, another group of ruins was discovered, which contained relics of a very interesting character. The interior of some of the larger houses was painted with a series of red bands and squares, fresh in colour, and contained fragments of ornamented pottery, besides what appeared to be pieces of blankets made from birds' feathers; these, perhaps, in ages past bedecked the shoulders of some red beauty, when the grim old walls echoed the fierce war-songs of a long-lost nation. But the most fortunate find at this spot, and the first of that description made in the country, was a cyst, constructed of timber smoothly plastered on the inside, containing remains of three of the ancient cliff-dwellers. One was in a sitting posture, the skin of the thighs and legs being in a perfect state of preservation. These ruins, as in the former case, were protected from the weather by an overhanging arch of rock.

At several points on the journey through Cañon de Chelly, hieroglyphics were traced, graven on the cliff wall. Most of the designs were unintelligible; but figures of animals, such as the bear and mountain sheep or goat, were prominent. Another cliff village was observed of a considerable size, but planted three hundred feet above the cañon bed, in such a position that it is likely to remain sacred from the foot of man for still further generations. The same elements which in geologic time fashioned the caves and recesses of the cañon walls, have in later times worn the approaches away, so that to-day they do not even furnish a footing for the bear or coyote. In what remote age and for how many generations the cliff-dwellers lived in these strange fastnesses, will probably never be determined. Faint traces of still older buildings are found here and there in the bed of Cañon de Chelly; and it is conjectured that this region was once densely populated along the watercourses, and that the tribes having been driven from their homes by a powerful foe, the remnant sought refuge in the caves of the cañon walls.

Of the great antiquity of these structures, there is no question. The Indian of to-day knows nothing of their history, has not even traditions concerning them. The Navajo, with a few poles plastered with a heavy deposit of earth, constructs his *hogan* or wigwam, and rarely remains in the same place winter and summer. He has no more idea of constructing a dwelling like those so perfectly preserved in the cliffs, than he has of baking specimens of pottery such as are found in fragments amongst the walls. In the fine quality of paste, in the animal handles—something like old Japanese ware—and in the general ornamentation, these exhibit a high order of excellence. Some specimens of what is called laminated ware are remarkable; threadlike layers of clay are laid one on each other with admirable delicacy and patience. In these fragments may yet be read something of the history of a vanished race.

They illuminate a dark corner in the world's history, and seem to indicate a people who once felt civilising influences higher than anything known by those uncouth figures whose camp-fires now glimmer at night across the silent starlit prairie.

TWO DAYS IN A LIFETIME.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN BOWOOD came forward. 'Sir Frederick, your servant; glad to see you,' he said in his hearty sailor-like fashion.

'I am glad to see you, Captain,' responded the Baronet as he proffered his hand. 'How's the gout this morning?'

'So, so. Might be better—might be worse. —You here, Miss Saucebox!' he added, turning to Elsie. 'Why are you not at your lessons—eh, now?'

'As if anybody could learn Latin roots on a sunny morning like this!' Then, clasping one of his arms with both her hands, and looking up coaxingly into his face, she said: 'You might give me a holiday, nunky dear.'

'Why, why? A holiday indeed!—Listen to her, Sir Frederick. The baggage is always begging for holidays.'

'But the baggage doesn't always get them,' was the answer with a pretty pout. Then, after another glance at the long-haired stranger, who was already busy with the piano, she said to herself: 'It is he; I am sure of it. And yet if I had not heard his voice, I should not have known him.'

Captain Bowood at this time had left his sixtieth birthday behind him, but he carried his years lightly. He was a bluff, hearty-looking, loud-voiced man, with a very red face, and very white hair and whiskers. A fever, several years previously, had radically impaired his eyesight, since which time he had taken to wearing gold-rimmed spectacles. He had a choleric temper; but his bursts of petulance were like those summer storms which are over almost as soon as they have broken, and leave not a cloud behind. Throughout the American Civil War, Captain Bowood had been known as one of the most daring and successful blockade-runners, and it was during those days of danger and excitement that he laid the foundation of the fortune on which he had since retired. No man was more completely ruled by his wife than the choleric but generous-hearted Captain, and no man suspected the fact less than he did.

'I drove over this morning,' said Sir Frederick, 'to see you about that bay mare which I hear you are desirous of getting rid of.'

'Yes, yes—just so. We'll go to the stable and have a look at her. By-the-bye, I was talking to Boyd just now, when your name cropped up. It seems he met you when you were both in South America. Oscar Boyd, engineering fellow and all that. You remember him, eh, now?'

'I certainly do remember a Mr Boyd; but it is many years since we met.' Then to himself the Baronet said: 'Can this be the other man? Oh! Lady Dimsdale.'

'A very agreeable fellow,' said the Captain. 'Here on a visit for a couple of days. A little matter of business between him and me to save lawyers' expenses.'

'The other man, without a doubt,' thought the Baronet. 'His wife must be dead.'

Miss Brandon had slipped unobserved out of the room. She was now sitting in the veranda, making-believe to be intent over her Latin verbs, but in reality waiting impatiently till the coast should be clear. She had not long to wait. Presently she heard the Captain say in his cheery loud-voiced way: 'Come along, Sir Frederick; we shall just have time to look at the mare before luncheon;' and a minute later, she heard the shutting of a door.

Then she shut her book, rose from her seat, and crossing on tiptoe to the open French-window, she peeped into the room. 'Is that you, Charley?' she asked in a voice that was little above a whisper.

'Whom else should it be?' answered the young man, looking round from the piano with a smile.

'I was nearly sure of it from the first; but then you look such a guy!'

'She calls me a guy! after all the trouble I have taken to get myself up like a foreign nobleman.' Speaking thus, he took off his spectacles and wig, and stood revealed, as pleasant-looking a young fellow as one would see in a day's march.

Elsie ran forward with a little cry of surprise and delight. 'Now I know you for my own!' she exclaimed; and when he took her in his arms and kissed her—more than once—she offered not the slightest resistance. 'But what a dreadful risk to run!' she went on as soon as she was set at liberty. 'Suppose your uncle—good gracious!'

'My uncle? He can't eat me, that's certain; and he has already cut me off with the proverbial shilling.'

'My poor boy! Fate is very, very hard upon you. We are both down on our luck, Charley; but we can die together, can't we?' As she propounded this question, she held out her box of bon-bons. Charley took one, she took another, and then the box was put away. 'A pan of charcoal'—she went on, giving her sweetmeat a gustatory turn over with her tongue—'door and windows close shut—you go to sleep and forget to wake up. What could be simpler?'

'Hardly anything. But we have not quite come to that yet. Of course, that dreadful Vice-chancellor won't let me marry you for some time to come; but he can't help himself when you are one-and-twenty.'

'That won't be for nearly four years,' answered Elsie with a pout. 'What a long, long time to look forward to!'

'We have only to be true to each other, which I am sure we shall be, and it will pass away far more quickly than you imagine. By that time, I hope to be earning enough money to find you a comfortable home.'

'There's my money, you know, Charley dear.'

'I don't mean to have anything to do with that. If I can't earn enough to keep my wife, I'll never marry.'

'Oh!'

'But I shall do that, dear. Why, I'm getting five guineas a week already; and if I'm not getting three times as much as that by the time you are twenty-one, I'll swallow my wig.'

'Your uncle will never forgive you for going on the stage.'

'O yes, he will, by-and-by, when he sees that I am making a fair living by it and really mean to stick to it—having sown all my wild-oats; and above all, when he finds how well they speak of me in his favourite newspaper. And that reminds me that it was what the *Telephone* said about me that caused old Brooker our manager to raise my screw from four guineas a week to five. I cut the notice out of the paper, you may be sure. Here it is.' Speaking thus, Master Charles produced his pocket-book, and drew from it a printed slip of paper, which he proceeded to read aloud: "'Although we have had occasion more than once to commend the acting of Mr Warden"—that's me—"we were certainly surprised last evening by his very masterly rendering of the part of Captain Cleveland. His byplay was remarkably clever; and his impassioned love-making in the third act, where timidity or hesitation would have been fatal to the piece, brought down the house, and earned him two well-merited recalls. We certainly consider that there is no more promising *jeune premier* than Mr Warden now on the stage." There, my pet, what do you think of that?' asked the young actor as he put back the slip of paper into his pocket-book.

But his pet vouchsafed no answer. Her face was turned from him; a tear fell from her eye. His arms were round her in a moment. 'My darling child, what can be the matter?' he asked.

'I—I wish you had never gone on the stage,' said Elsie, with a sob in her voice. 'I—I wish you were still a tea-broker!'

'Good gracious! what makes you wish anything so absurd?'

'It's not absurd. Doesn't the newspaper speak of your "impassioned love-making"? And then people—lovers, I mean—are always kissing each other on the stage.'

'Just as they do sometimes in real life;' and with that he suited the action to the word.

'Don't, Mr Summers, please.' And she pushed him away, and her eyes flashed through her tears, and she looked very pretty.

Mr Summers sat down on a chair and was unfeeling enough to laugh. 'Why, what a little goose you are!' he said.

'I don't see it at all.' This with a toss of her head. Certainly, it is not pleasant to be called a goose.

'You must know, if you come to think of it, that both love-making and kissing on the stage are only so much make-believe, however real they may seem to the audience. During the last six months, it has been my fate to have to make love to about a dozen different ladies; and during the next six months I shall probably have to do the same thing to as many more; but to imagine on that account that I really

care for any of them, or that they really care for me, would be as absurd as to suppose that because in the piece we shall play to-morrow night I shall hunt Tom Bowles—who is the villain of the drama—through three long acts, and kill him in the fourth, he and I must necessarily hate each other. The fact is that Tom and I are the best of friends, and generally contrive to lodge together when on our travels.'

Elsie was half convinced that she *had* made a goose of herself, but of course was not prepared to admit it. 'I see that Miss Wylie is acting in your company,' she said. 'I saw her in London about a year ago; she is very, very pretty.'

'Miss Wylie is a very charming woman.'

'And you make love to her?'

'Every night of my life—for a little while.'

Elsie felt her unreasonable mood coming back. 'Then why don't you marry her?' she asked with a ring of bitterness in her voice.

Again that callous-hearted young man laughed. 'Considering that she is married already, and the happy mother of two children, I can hardly see the feasibility of your suggestion.'

'Then why does she call herself "Miss Wylie?"'

'It's a way they have in the profession. She goes by her maiden name. In reality, she is Mrs Berrington. Her husband travels with her. He plays "heavy fathers."'

Miss Brandon looked mystified. Her lover saw it.

'You see this suit of clothes,' he said, 'and this wig and these spectacles. They are part of the "make-up" of a certain character I played last week. I was the Count von Rosenthal, in love with the beautiful daughter of a poor music-master. In order to be able to make love to her, and win her for myself, and not for my title and riches, I go in the guise of a student, and take lodgings in the same house where she and her father are living. After many mishaps, all ends as it ought to do. Charlotte and I fall into each other's arms, and her father blesses us both with tears in his eyes. Miss Wylie played the Professor's daughter, and her husband played the father's part, and very well he did it too.'

'Her husband allowed you to make love to his wife?' said Miss Brandon, with wide-open eyes.

'Of course he did; and he was not so foolish as to be jealous, like some people. Why should he be?'

Elsie was fully convinced by this time that she had made a goose of herself. 'You may kiss me, Charley,' she said with much sweetness. 'Dear boy, I forgive you.'

Suddenly the sound of a footstep caused them to start and fly asunder. There, close to the open French-window, stood Captain Bowood, glaring from one to the other of them. Miss Brandon gave vent to a little shriek and fled from the room. The Captain came forward, a fine frenzy in his eye. 'Who the deuce may you be, sir?' he spluttered, although he had recognised Charley at the first glance.

'I have the honour to be your very affectionate and obedient nephew, sir.'

The Captain's reply to this was an inarticulate growl. Next moment, his eye fell on the discarded wig. 'And what the dickens may this be, sir?'

he asked as he lifted up the article in question on the end of his cane.

'A trifle of property, sir, belonging to your affectionate and obedient nephew;' and with that he took the wig off the end of the cane and crammed it into his pocket.

'So, so. This is the way, you young jackanapes, that you set my commands at defiance, and steal into my house after being forbidden ever to set foot in it again! You young snake-in-the-grass! You crocodile! It would serve you right to give you in charge to the police. How do I know that you are not after my spoons and forks? Come now.'

'I am glad to find, sir, that your powers of vituperation are in no way impaired since I had the pleasure of seeing you last. Time cannot wither them.—Hem! I believe, sir, that you have had the honour of twice paying my debts, amounting in the aggregate to the trifling sum of five hundred pounds. In this paper, sir, you will find twenty-five sovereigns, being my first dividend of one shilling in the pound. A further dividend will be paid at the earliest possible date.' As Mr Summers spoke thus, he drew from his waistcoat pocket a small sealed packet and placed the same quietly on the table.

The irate Captain glanced at the packet and then at his imperturbable nephew. The cane trembled in his fingers; for a moment or two he could not command his voice. 'What, what!' he cried at last. 'The boy will drive me crazy. What does he mean with his confounded rigmale? Dividend! Shilling in the pound! Bother me, if I can make head or tail of his foolery!'

'And yet, sir, both my words and my meaning were clear enough, as no doubt you will find when you come to think them over in your calmer moments.—And now I have the honour to wish you a very good-morning; and I hope to afford you the pleasure of seeing me again before long.' Speaking thus, Charles Summers made his uncle a very low bow, took up his hat, and walked out of the room.

'There's insolence! There's audacity!' burst out the Captain as soon as he found himself alone. 'The pleasure of seeing him again—eh? Only let me find him here without my leave—I'll—I'll—I don't know what I won't do!—And now I come to think of it, it looks very much as if he and Miss Saucebox were making love to each other. How dare they? I'll haul 'em both up before the Vice-chancellor.' Here his eye fell on the packet on the table. He took it up and examined it. 'Twenty-five sovereigns, did he say? As if I was going to take the young idiot's money! I'll keep it for the present, and send it back to him by-and-by. Must teach him a lesson. Do him all the good in the world. False hair and spectacles, eh? Deceived his old uncle finely. Just the sort of trick I should have delighted in when I was a boy. But Master Charley will be clever if he catches the old fox asleep a second time.' He had reached the French-window on his way out, when he came to a sudden stand, and gave vent to a low whistle. 'Ha, ha! Lady Dimsdale and Mr Boyd, and mighty taken up with each other they seem. Well, well. I'm no spoil-sport. I'll not let them know I've seen them. Looks uncommonly as if Dan Cupid had got them by the ears. A widow too! All widows

ought to be labelled "Dangerous." Smiling and chuckling to himself, the Captain drew back, crossed the room, and went out by the opposite door.

THE COLOUR-SENSE.

THE phenomenon of Colour is one with which all who are not blind must of necessity be familiar. So accustomed, indeed, have we been to it throughout all our lives, that most of us are inclined to take it for granted, and probably trouble ourselves very seldom as to its true cause. A brief discussion, therefore, of the nature of the Colour-sense may, we trust, prove not uninteresting to our readers.

What, then, is colour? It is obvious that it may be considered in two ways; we may either discuss the impression it makes on the mind, or the real external causes to which it is due. Viewed in the first light, colour is as much a sensation as is that of being struck or burnt. Viewed from the latter stand-point, it is merely a property of light; hence, in order correctly to understand its nature, we must first briefly examine the nature of this phenomenon.

According to modern scientific men, light is not a material substance, but consists of a kind of motion or vibration communicated by the luminous body to the surrounding medium, and travelling throughout space with an enormous velocity. The medium, however, through which light-waves travel is not air, nor any of the ordinary forms of matter. Of its real nature nothing is known, and its very existence is only assumed in order to account for the observed phenomena. It must be very subtle and very elastic; but it is a curious fact that the nature of the vibrations in question would seem to preclude the supposition that it is a fluid, these being rather such as would be met with in the case of a solid. To this medium, whatever its true nature may be, the name of *ether* is given.

The sensation, then, which we know by the name of Light is to be regarded as the effect on the retina of the eye of certain very rapid vibrations in the *ether* of the universe. All these waves travel with the same swiftness; but they are not all of the same length, nor of the same frequency; and investigation has shown that it is to this difference of wave-length that difference of colour is due. In other words, the impression to which we give the name of a certain colour is due to the effect on the retina of vibrations of a certain frequency. This conclusion is arrived at by a very simple experiment, in which advantage is taken of the following principle. So long as a ray of light is passing through the same medium, it travels in one straight line; but in passing obliquely from one medium into another of different density, its path is bent through a certain angle, just as a column of soldiers has a tendency to change its direction of march when obliquely entering a wood or other difficult ground. Now, this angle is naturally greatest in the case of the shortest waves, so that when a ray of light is thus bent out of its course—or, as it is called, 'refracted'—the various sets of vibrations of which it is composed all travel in different directions, and may be separately examined. In fact the ray of light is analysed, or broken up

into its component parts. The most convenient apparatus to employ for this purpose is a prism of glass. It is found, as is well known, that if a beam of ordinary sun-light be allowed to pass through the prism and be then received on a screen, it is resolved into a band of colours succeeding one another in the order of those of the rainbow. Such a band of colours is called a 'spectrum.'

Now, of the visible portion of the spectrum the red rays are those which undergo the least refraction, while the violet rays are bent through the greatest angle, the other colours in their natural order being intermediate. From what has been said above, it is evident that, this being the case, the portion of the light consisting of waves of greatest length and least frequency is that which produces on the eye the sensation of red, and that each of the other colours is caused by vibrations of a certain definite length. We are speaking now of the visible part of the spectrum. As a matter of fact, the waves of least and greatest frequency make no impression on the eye at all; but the former have the greatest heating power, while the latter are those which chiefly produce chemical effects such as are utilised in photography.

Having now arrived at the nature of colour, we are in a position to apply these facts to the discussion of coloured substances.

When light falls on a body, a portion of it is turned back or, as it is called, 'reflected' from the surface; another part is taken up or 'absorbed' by the substance; while, in the case of a transparent body, a third portion passes on through it, and is said to be 'transmitted.' Most bodies absorb the different parts of the light in different proportions, and hence their various colours are produced. The colour of a transparent substance is that of the light which it transmits; while an opaque body is said to be of the colour of the light which it reflects, or rather of that part of it which is irregularly scattered.

There are three colours in the solar spectrum which are called 'primary,' owing to the fact that they cannot be produced by mixtures. These are red, violet, and deep olive green. The generally-received idea that red, blue, and yellow are primary colours, is by recent scientific authorities not regarded as tenable; it arose from observations on mixtures of pigments rather than of coloured light. For instance, objects seen through two plates of glass, one of which is blue and the other yellow, appear green; but this by no means justifies us in saying that a mixture of blue and yellow light is green. For remembering that the two glasses do not appear coloured by reason of their adding anything to the light, but rather through their stopping the passage of certain rays, we shall see that the green light which is finally transmitted is not a mixture of yellow and blue at all, but is rather that portion of the light which both of the glasses allow to pass. The blue glass will probably stop all rays except blue, violet, and green; the yellow glass, all but green, yellow, and orange. The only light, therefore, which can pass through both glasses is green. The same remark applies to mixtures of pigments, each particle being really transparent, though the whole bulk appears opaque. It is easy, however, to obtain real mixtures of coloured lights by

employing suitable arrangements, of which one of the simplest consists of a disc painted with alternate bands of colours and rapidly rotated. By such means it is found that a mixture of blue and yellow is not green, but white or gray, and that yellow can itself be produced by a mixture of red and green in proper proportions. The late Professor Clerk Maxwell made an interesting series of experiments on colour mixtures by means of an apparatus known as Maxwell's Colour-box, by which any number of colours could be combined in any required proportions.

It would, however, be beyond the scope of the present paper to discuss the many important results which followed from his investigations. Helmholtz believed the three primary colour sensations to be due to the action of three sets of nerves at the back of the retina, each of which is excited only by vibrations within a certain range of frequency; and this theory is now generally held. In the case of some persons, the sensation corresponding to red is wholly absent, and the spectrum appears to consist of two colours with white or gray between. The nature of these colours is, for obvious reasons, difficult to determine; but one doubtless nearly corresponds to our sensation of blue, while the other is a deep colour, probably dark green. Persons thus affected are usually called 'colour-blind;' but this epithet is a misnomer, and the term 'dichroic vision' has been suggested for the phenomenon instead.

We have already remarked that our range of vision is comparatively narrow, the extreme portions of the spectrum making no impression on the retina. But we have no reason to think that these limits have been the same in all ages. The evidence would rather tend to show that the human eye is undergoing a slow and gradual development, which enables it to distinguish between colours which the ancients regarded as identical, and may in future render it able to perceive some portions at least of the parts of the spectrum which are now invisible. The Vedas of India, which are among the most ancient writings known, attest that in the most remote ages only white and black could be distinguished.

It would seem as if the perception of different degrees of intensity of light preceded by a long time the appreciation of various kinds of colours. After weighing the evidence, Magnus has come to the conclusion that red was the first colour to become visible, then yellow and orange; and afterwards, though at a considerable interval, green, blue, and violet in order. Various passages in the Old Testament have been cited as proof that the ancients failed to perceive all the colours seen by us, one of the most remarkable being in Ezekiel i. 27 and 28, where the prophet compares the appearance of the brightness round about the fire to that of the 'bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain'—which passage has been cited by Mr Gladstone in his article in the *Nineteenth Century* for October 1877, as indicating a want of appreciation of distinct colours among the ancients. This is not quite clear, however, as the appearance round about the supernatural fire might have assumed auroral or rainbow tints. But the most important evidence on the apparent want of capacity among the ancients to discriminate between colours is that afforded by the writings

of Homer, who, in the opinion of Magnus, could neither have perceived green nor blue. The point has been carefully examined by Mr Gladstone, who comes to the conclusion that this estimate is quite within the mark. Inquiring in detail into each of Homer's colour-epithets, he shows that almost all must be in reality regarded as expressing degrees of intensity rather than of quality, and that the few exceptions are all confined to red and yellow. The brilliant blue sky of the southern climes where Homer lived must have appeared to him as of a neutral gray hue. Of course, the suggestion that the writings usually assigned to Homer were in reality the productions of many authors, does not invalidate the reasoning at all, as we do not attribute any defect in vision to the poet which was not equally manifested by his contemporaries.

It is curious that the distinction between green and blue is not yet perfectly developed in all nations. Travellers tell us that the Burmese often confuse these colours in a remarkable manner. This and other facts suggest that the development of the colour-sense is not yet completed; and that in the future our range of perception may be still further enlarged, so that the now invisible rays may be recognised by the eye as distinct colours.

'SO UNREASONABLE OF STEP-MOTHER!'

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

Nor long before the death of George Eliot, on a return trip to London by the Midland route, I broke my journey at Leicester, to pay a flying visit to Coventry, where the great writer had spent many of her happiest days. There I was privileged by having for escort one of her most valued friends; and many interesting reminiscences were for our benefit called to mind, especially of a visit paid to Edinburgh, 'mine own romantic town,' and of the impression the beauty of its situation had made on her mind. Next morning, every favourite haunt of hers was searched out and commented on, as well as the interesting points of the quaint old city of Coventry; and bidding good-bye to our hospitable friends, I departed alone by the evening mail for Leicester, there to wait for the midnight train to Edinburgh, feeling satisfied that the hours had been well spent. Arrived in Leicester, I was fortunate in finding a fellow-countryman in one of the porters, who at once took me and my belongings under his especial protection, and when he had seen me comfortably 'happit up' on one of the sofas of the luxurious waiting-room, he retired, bidding me take a quiet forty winks, and keep my mind quite easy, for he would give me timely notice of the arrival of the Scotch train. Scarcely had I begun to feel the loneliness of my situation, when the door opened, and a female figure entered, rather unwilling, apparently; nay, seemed to be pushed in, while a deep male voice advised that she should rest by the fire, and not put herself about so. By a succession of jerks, she advanced to the chair by the fire opposite to my

sofa; and finding that I was not asleep, as she had supposed, at once, and without any circumlocution, began to unburden her mind, her words flowing from her mouth at express speed, regardless of comma or full stop.

'Not put myself about! Humph! That's so like men.—Ain't it now, miss? Ah, I dessay you've 'ad your own share of worriting before now, and know 'ow downright masterful and provoking they can be at times. I tell you *wat*, miss, if you want to be at peace at all, you've got to say black is w'ite, if they 'ave a mind that it should be so.—Not put myself about! I'd like to know 'ow one with a 'eart and a soul in their body could 'elp being put about, as I am.'

I ventured to hope nothing serious had occurred to disturb her composure or to put her about, my voice at once disclosing that I hailed from the North, and also that I was of a sympathetic nature.

'Put about!' she once more exclaimed. 'Why, I am put about; yes—no use trying to appear as if I was anything else. Yes; only think, miss! Not 'alf an hour gone, a telegram was brought to our 'ouse by the telegraph-boy. His mother, a widow, keeps a little bit of a shop not many doors from our own. Yes; he 'ands it in saying it was for father. I opened it; and there, staring me right in the eyes were them words: "*Step-mother is lying a-dying.*"—Not put about! I'd just like to know 'ow anybody could 'ave been anything else than put about, after *that*. Now, miss, you must understand that John—that's my 'usband—is a great go-to-meeting-man. Why, at that very moment he might be at the church meeting, or he might 'ave been at the Building meeting, or he might 'ave been at a Masonic meeting, or he might 'ave been at any other meeting under the sun. And w'atever was I to do? for there was the telegraph-boy; there was the telegram, with the words as plain as plain: "*Step-mother is lying a-dying.*" I put on my bonnet and shawl; I 'urried to father's office—he is a master-builder, is father, with sixteen men under him and three apprentices; and John, my son, for partner. I rushed in quite out of breath, not expecting to find any one there at that time of night; but there I found John—that's my son—and says I, without taking time to sit down, though I was like to drop: "John, w'atever is to be done! Here's a telegraph-boy has brought a telegram for father to say, "*step-mother is a-dying.*"'

'Now, miss, I just put it to you, if them telegrams, coming so sudden at hours w'en no one expects postmen's knocks, and bringing such news as that, ain't enough to put any one about! Augh! Men are so queer; there's no nerves in their bodies, and can't understand us women. I've no patience with them. There was John—that's my son—w'at did he do? Why, look at me quite composed, as if it weren't no news at all, and says he: "Don't put yourself about, mother. Father has gone off not many minutes ago to the paddock, to give little Bobbie a ride." And with that he takes down a time-table, to look at it for the last train, puts on his hat, calls for a cab, and says quite composed: "Jump in, mother. We'll go in pursuit of father, and then we'll catch the train

quite easily." It seemed to me the horse just crept up the 'ill like a snail; only John would 'ave it they were going faster than their usual pace. W'en we came to our door, w'at do you think we saw, now, miss?—No; you'll never guess, I dessay. Why, *father*, to be sure! Yes; there he was; and there was the pony; and there was little Bobbie—all three of 'em just about to start for a long ride into the country. I 'ad carried the telegram in my pocket; and do you know, miss, after all my flurry and worry, w'at did John—that's my 'usband—say, think you?—Augh! Men are so unreasonable, and w'at's more, such cool and 'eartless pieces. Yes; that's w'at they are; and I don't care who hears me a-saying it.

'John—that's father—after he had read the telegram, he turns to me, and says he: "Why, mother, 'ave your senses left your 'ead altogether? W'atever made you carry off the telegram! Couldn't you 'ave stayed quietly at 'ome, instead of putting yourself about in this here fashion? If you 'ad, we'd 'ave been at the station without any hurry at all, by this time."

'I felt too angry to speak, I do declare, miss. I think the older men grow, the more aggravating they get to a sensitive nature. So I gathered the things together father said we'd better take with us, into my travelling-basket, without as much as a single word—a stranger coming in would 'ave thought me dumb—while father sent a man back to the paddock with little Bobbie and the pony. We then got into the cab once more; and here we are, with John—that's my son—a-looking after the tickets and the luggage; and father smoking his pipe outside as cool as cool. O dear, if they wouldn't put me out with their "Keep cool, mother; no need to fluster and flurry so, mother"—"Take it easy, good ooman; don't put yourself about"—I'd bear it better, I certainly should.

'Is step-mother nice? you ask. Oh—well—that's just as you take it. Some people say she's nice; some say she's quite the opposite. But'—and here she drew her chair closer to me, and in a more confidential tone, continued: 'I tell you *w'at*, miss—I've said it before, and I say it again—step-mother, in spite of her religious profession and san'timonious ways, is cantankerous. No use a-trying to hide it—step-mother is just w'at I say, *can-tankerous*. I've said it before; I say it again—she'd show her cantankerousness to the very last. And han't my words come true, for here she is lying a-dying, and Mary-Anne's wedding fixed for Friday of this very week!—O my—now that I come to 'ave a quiet moment to think, w'atever am I to do? It's so unreasonable of step-mother! Why, the dressmaker was coming this very evening to fit my dress on for the second time—a new black silk it is—and w'atever will *she* think, w'en she finds I've gone off without as much as a good-bye message? You see, miss, Mary-Anne is going to marry into quite a genteel family. Father, and John—that's my son—he comes to me not many weeks gone, and says he: "Mother, I 'ope you are going to 'ave a nice dress for this wedding. I 'ope it will be a silk or a satin you decide to buy." And says I: "John, you know w'at father is, and 'as been all his life—a just man to all; but a man who looks

upon gay clothes as not necessary. And then, John, you know as well as I do that father is rather close-fisted w'en money has to be paid out—like his own father before him, who was looked upon by all as the most parsimonious man in the town. I don't say father is quite as bad; but close-fisted I do say he is, John; and you know it. Were I to say: 'Father, I'd like to 'ave a silk dress for this wedding'—and I don't hide the fact from you, John, that I certainly should—he'd just laugh. I know it beforehand. He'd say: 'Why, mother, 'aven't you been content with a good stuff-dress all our married life, and can't you go on to the end so? I've over and over again said my wife looked as well as most women in the town of Leicester.'

"But," says John—that's my son—"mother, you owe your duty certainly to father. I'm not going against it; but w'at I says is: You owe your duty to your son also; and w'en I wish my mother to look better than she's ever done before, why—to oblige me—you'll go and purchase the best silk-dress in town, 'ave it made fashionable, with frills and all the fal-de-rals and etceteras; send in the account in my name; and if father makes any objections, why, let him settle the matter with me."

"You see, miss, John is getting to be so like father—both firm, very; and if they take a notion of any kind w'atever into their 'eads, you'd move this station as soon as move them from their purpose; so the dress 'as been bought; and w'at father will say to it—for it's to be made in the height of the fashion—I can't say."

A few judicious questions about the step-mother who was lying a-dying, drew from my companion that the said old lady was rich as well as cantankerous; and that, as there were other relations who might step in to the injury of the worthy builder, who was her only stepson, it was, to say the least, but prudent to be on the spot.

"Ah, yes, miss," she exclaimed, stretching her hands out to keep the heat of the fire from her face, 'this is a very strange world. Only on Sunday, the vicar was preaching to us against worldly-mindedness, telling us that as we came naked into the world, so we left it, carrying nothing away. But, miss, step-mother ain't like the most of people; and she's going to manage to take with her as much money as she possibly can.—How is she going to do it? Why, miss—she's going to 'ave a coffin!—No need to look surprised, miss. O yes; we all bury our dead in coffins; but w'at kind of a coffin is step-mother going to 'ave, do you think? No; don't try to guess, for you'd be down to Scotland and up again before it would ever come into your 'ead.—No; not a velvet one, nor a satin; but a *hoak* one.—Yes; I thought you would get a scare. A *hoak* coffin is w'at it is to be. And she's going to 'ave bearers—six of 'em. Each bearer is to 'ave 'at-bands and scarfs, and two pounds apiece. And if all that pomp and tomfoolery ain't taking so much money out of the world with her, I don't know w'at is. W'en John—that's father—heard of it, says he to me: "Mother, if you survives me, bury me plain, but comf'able;" and says I: "Father, if you survives me, I 'ope you will do the same by me—plain, but comf'able; for I tell you w'at, father, I'd not lie easy under-

ground thinking of the waste of good money over such 'umbug."

Here the waiting-room door opened hurriedly, and the worthy woman bounded to her feet at the one word 'Mother!' pronounced in such a decided tone that I too was standing beside her before I knew what I was doing, with all my wraps tossed higgledy-piggledy on the floor. Advancing with her to the door, she got out of me that my immediate destination was Scotland—a place, to her mind, evidently as remote as the arctic regions; and in her astonishment, she forgot the necessity there was to hurry to get in to her train, now ready to start again. She even seemed to forget that step-mother was lying a-dying, as she insisted upon introducing me to her husband, whose huge body was wrapped in a greatcoat, with tippet after tippet on it up to his neck. 'Only to think, John—this lady is going to Scotland all alone, John! She'll be travelling all night.—O dear, however are you to do it, miss; ain't you afraid?—Yes, John; I'm coming.—Good-bye, miss; we've 'ad quite a pleasant chat, I do assure you; the time seems to 'ave flown.'

I hurried her along the platform, whispering to her as I did so: 'I hope step-mother will rally a bit; that if she must pass away, it may be next week, so that Mary-Anne may get her wedding comfortably over.' At the very door of the carriage she paused, seized my hand, shook it warmly, as she exclaimed: 'Well, now, you 'ave a feeling 'eart; but I don't expect her to be so accommodat-ing. No; I've said it before, and I say it again—step-mother is—*can-ta*—Why, w'atever is the matter?'

Next thing that happened, the little woman was lifted up bodily in her son's arms—a counterpart of his father—and deposited in the carriage; while her husband, in spite of his lumbering large body, succeeded in jumping in just as the patience of all the railway officials was exhausted, and the signal given to start the train. Before it was lost to view, a white handkerchief fluttered out, by way of good-bye, causing a smile to rise over the calm features of John the younger, who, lifting his hat politely to me, bade me good-evening, adding: 'Mother is no great traveller, so she is easily put about. Dessay if she went often from 'ome, she'd learn to be more composed.'

From that hour I have never ceased to regret that I did not ask the good-natured young builder to forward me a local paper with the account of the death and burial of 'step-mother.' No doubt there would be due notice taken of such an interesting personage, as she lay in state in her 'hoak' coffin, surrounded by her bearers in the flowing scarfs and hat-bands. Sharp as my friends generally give me credit for being, I own I committed a grievous blunder; I am therefore obliged to leave my story without an end, not being able even to add that the fair Mary-Anne's wedding came off on the appointed day, or was postponed till after the complimentary days of mourning were past. I cheer myself with the thought that 'John—that's father'—being a firm man and a sensible, would insist upon the previous arrangements standing good, seeing that the bridegroom—a most important fact I have omitted to record—had a fortnight's holiday reluctantly

granted to him by his employers. Why, now that I think of it, my countryman the railway porter would have sent me any number of papers, judging by the kindly interest he took in my behalf, and the determined manner he fought for a particular seat for me in a particular carriage when the time came for my train to start. 'Na, na, mem; nae need for thanks; blood's thicker than water,' he said. 'Never you fear, now that the Scotch guard has ta'en up your cause; you're a' right; he'll see that ye're safely housed.' And safely housed I was, and went steaming out of the station with my worthy friend hanging on by the door, calling to me: 'If you're ever in the town o' Perth, mem, my auld mother would be downright pleased to see you, for my sake. Tell her I'm getting on as weel as can be expectit, sae far frae hame.'

All night, my disturbed sleep was made doubly so by dreams of old women of every age and style. Now I was hunting for the porter's nameless mother; now I was standing by the bedside of the step-mother who was lying a-dying. Again I was an active assistant at a marriage ceremony, with the fair Mary-Anne, surrounded by her genteel relations, leaning on my shoulder, weeping copiously at the idea of travelling to Scotland. Once more I stood gazing down on the old step-mother; and just as the day dawned, I was fairly roused, in my determination not to be smothered under an oak coffin and a pyramid of scarfs, hat-bands, and bearers, by the tumbling of my own bonnet-box from the luggage-rack above me.

FRENCH DETECTIVES.

'The Secret Police' in France are not only personally unknown to the general public, but, save in exceptional cases, even to each other. It is known where they may be found at a moment's notice when wanted; but, as a rule, they do not frequent the prefecture more than can be helped. They have nothing whatever to do with serving summonses or executing warrants. There are among them men who have lived in almost every class of life, and each of them has what may be called a special line of business of his own. In the course of their duty, some of them mix with the receivers of stolen goods, others with thieves, many with what are called in Paris commercial rascals, and not a few with those whose 'industry' it is to melt silver and other property of a like valuable nature. Forgers, sharpers of all kinds, housebreakers and horse-stealers—a very numerous class in Paris—have each all their special agents of the police, who watch them, and know where to lay hands upon them when they are wanted. A French detective who cannot assume and act up to any character, and who cannot disguise himself in any manner so effectually as not to be recognised even by those who know him best, is not considered fit to hold his appointment. Their ability in this way is marvellous. Some years ago, one of them made a bet that he would in the course of the next few days address a gentleman with whom he was acquainted four times, for at least ten minutes each time, and that he should not know him on any occasion until the detective had discovered himself. As a matter of course, the gentleman was on his guard, and mistrusted

every one who came near him. But the man won his bet. It is needless to enter into the particulars. Suffice it to say that in the course of the next four days he presented himself in the character of a bootmaker's assistant, a fiacre-driver, a venerable old gentleman with a great interest in the Bourse, and finally as a waiter in the hotel in which the gentleman was staying.

'NOT LOST, BUT GONE BEFORE.'

My little child, with clustering hair,
Strewn o'er thy dear, dead brow,
Though in the past divinely fair,
More lovely art thou now.
God bade thy gentle soul depart,
On brightly shimmering wings;
Yet near thy clay, thy mother's heart
All weakly, fondly clings.

My beauteous child, with lids of snow
Closed o'er thy dim blue eyes,
Should it not soothe my grief to know
They shine beyond the skies?
Above thy silent cot I kneel,
With heart all crushed and sore,
While through the gloom these sweet words steal:
'Not lost, but gone before.'

My darling child, these flowers I lay
On locks too fair, too bright,
For the damp grave-mist, cold and gray,
To dim their sunny light.
Soft baby tresses bathed in tears,
Your gold was all mine own!
Ah, weary months! ah, weary years!
That I must dwell alone.

My only child, I hold thee still,
Clasped in my fond embrace!
My love, my sweet! how fixed, how chill,
This smile upon thy face!
The grave is cold, my clasp is warm,
Yet give thee up I must;
And birds will sing when thy loved form
Lies mouldering in the dust.

My angel child, thy tiny feet
Dance through my broken dreams;
Ah me, how joyous, quaint, and sweet,
Their baby pattering seems!
I hush my breath, to hear thee speak;
I see thy red lips part;
But wake to feel thy cold, cold cheek,
Close to my breaking heart!

Soon, soon my burning tears shall fall
Upon thy coffin lid;
Nor may those tears thy soul recall
To earth—nay, God forbid!
Be happy in His love, for I
Resigned, though wounded sore,
Can hear His angels whispering nigh:
'Not lost, but gone before.'

FANNY FORRESTER.

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